

ICOMOS Ireland is the Irish committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites – a professional association that works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places around the world. **Other Stories: Cultural Heritage and Society** was commissioned by ICOMOS Ireland and funded by the Heritage Council as part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, with further funding from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin City Council and Dublin Port.

OTHER STORIES - Cultural Heritage and Society
ICOMOS Ireland Research and Advocacy Project



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Introduction

The case study described here - Battles, Bricks and Bridges - is part of a larger research and advocacy project which ICOMOS Ireland commissioned and carried out as part of European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018. While not explicitly setting out to foreground Rights based approaches to cultural heritage as the primary driver, or framework for the identified case studies, access to and empowerment of the rights bearers, has been an identifiable outcome.

Context

‘Other Stories, Cultural Heritage and Society’, the publication arising from this project, had aimed to highlight the spirit and principles of The Faro Convention¹ as expressed in an Irish context. The convention provides a frame of reference for heritage policy that recognises the following:

- The right of all citizens to benefit from and contribute to cultural heritage and to have their cultural heritage respected.
- The responsibility of all citizens to respect the cultural heritage of others.
- The value of cultural heritage in improving quality of life for all citizens.
- The contribution that heritage can make towards building a peaceful, democratic and sustainable society.

The Faro Convention takes an expansive view of cultural heritage, defining it as: “a group of resources inherited from the past with which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions”. It is a definition that encompasses tangible, intangible and digital aspects of heritage, but which goes beyond those terms to focus primarily on the values that connect people and heritage. Faro also introduces the concept of "heritage communities" - which may, for example, be a community of place (linked by a shared geographic location) or of interest (connected by a shared interest in any given aspect of heritage) and can transcend spatial territories. With thirteen case studies and voices included the publication documents how each project started, what sustains them, and what their broader impact is. In determining the projects for inclusion, key factors were taken into

¹ The Faro Convention - officially called the ‘Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society’ - was originally developed out of the work of the Council of Europe on ‘Heritage, Identity and Diversity’ after the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s.

account including the geographical spread of the projects (encompassing the island of Ireland) as well as their scale and ambition - from short to long-term. Many of the projects combine rural and community development, archaeology, the arts, planning, recreation and biodiversity and have been able to sustain their initiatives by developing modest support over time across multi-agency funding partners and collaboration with other stakeholders. The study understands cultural heritage as an open resource with value in people's everyday lives. It acknowledges the unevenness and hesitancy of how people may engage with cultural heritage.

Particular objectives for ICOMOS Ireland in undertaking this project have been to:

- Advocate for good practice approaches which will influence existing and future cultural heritage initiatives, policies, programmes, projects.
- Inform and influence the cultural heritage sector on the principles and practices promoted by the Faro convention and by extension, rights-based approaches
- Place ICOMOS at the heart of good participatory practices

The case studies have been considered under three themes.


‘Story: People and Place’ examined projects that focus on the relationship between people and place through storytelling.

‘Living Skills’ looks at the positive potential of utilising craft skills and knowledge to provide opportunities for learning and collective making.

‘Land Use: Shared Space’ learns from projects that have negotiated complex processes to provide broader public access and understanding to our shared landscapes and biodiversity.

The Case Studies and their Location

LOCATION - Case Studies & Voices



STORY: PEOPLE AND PLACE

Case Studies	
X-PO	Co. Clare
The Bridge Street Project	Co. <u>Kilkenny</u>
14 Henrietta Street	Co. Dublin
Voices	
Kilmuckridge Song Project	Co. Wexford
The Diamond War Memorial	Co. Derry
Foyle Punt	Co. Donegal/Derry

LIVING SKILLS

Case Studies	
Meitheal Mara	Co. Cork
Battles, Bricks and Bridges	Co. <u>Fermanagh</u>
Voices	
Headford Lace	Co. Galway

LAND USE: SHARED SPACE

Case Studies	
Great Western Greenway	Co. Mayo
Irish Seed Savers	Co. Clare
Voices	
Thomastown River Trust	Co. <u>Kilkenny</u>
BI Urban	Co. Dublin

LIVING SKILLS

Battles, Bricks and Bridges, Arney, Co. Fermanagh

Battles, Bricks and Bridges started as a year-long community-led archaeology project designed to connect three aspects of local heritage ‘battles, bricks and bridges’ in the townlands of Killesher and Cleenish in County Fermanagh.

History is not the past; it is an artful assembly of materials from the past, designed for usefulness in the future. In this way, history verges upon that idea of tradition in which it is identified with the resource out of which people create.²

² Glassie, Henry, Tradition, The Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 108, No. 430, Common Ground: Keywords for the Study of Expressive Culture (Autumn, 1995), pp. 395-412, American Folklore Society American Folklore Society Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/541653>

Background.

Killesher Community Development Association and Cleenish Community Association joined forces to explore the rich archaeology, customs, and heritage of their local area within rural Fermanagh - a Northern Ireland border county of lakes and waterways. The project surveyed the disputed site of the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits³, revived traditional brick-making skills and oversaw the restoration and recognition of the Arney Bridge. With a proactive project manager working closely with the two community organisations initial heritage funding was secured through close active partnership with Queen's University Belfast and the Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities Northern Ireland. A key inspiration behind the initiative was the work of American ethnographer and anthropologist Henry Glassie⁴. Glassie wrote five books about the cluster of townlands found at the mouth of the Arney Estuary in the 1970s where he lived on and off for seven years. The project took shape around Glassie's theoretical findings and the folklore and local knowledge he recorded. The project began through conversations and by calling interested people together in Arney Hall in 2013. The two communities gathered to offer their ideas and opinions and the project programme evolved to include archaeological excavation and traditional skills training. Meetings continued throughout the project and often led to talks, storytelling and reminiscences. They proved an important communication tool in reporting the project findings back to the community. The award-winning project secured funding through multiple sources including the Heritage Lottery Fund in Northern Ireland, The NI Department of the Environment, The Fermanagh Trust, Fermanagh District Council and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

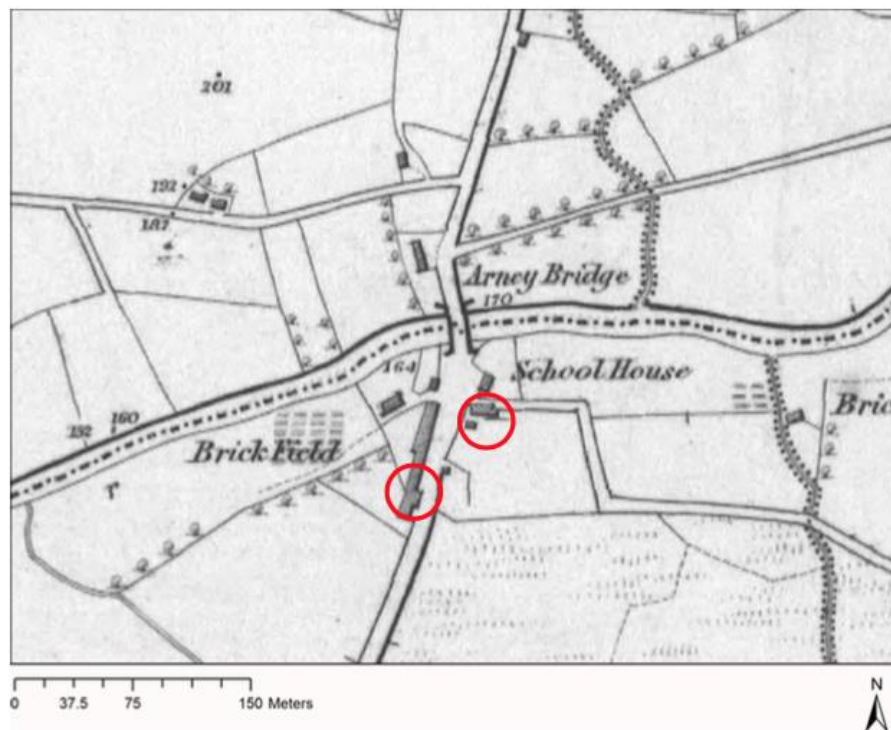
Project development and sustainability

Over 2013 and 2014 the three distinct elements of the project unfolded. The first aspect of the project focused on the sites around Arney Bridge which became a hive of activity - including fieldwork and excavation to locate and excavate a 19th-century schoolhouse, brickmaking kilns

³ In 1594, soldiers loyal to Queen Elizabeth I, sent to relieve a garrison besieged by Irish chieftain Hugh Maguire in Enniskillen Castle, were ambushed as they crossed the Arney River. The troops were massacred and their supplies (including biscuits) were thrown into the river. It became known as the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits.

⁴ Henry Glassie's book was called *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community* (1982).

and brickmakers cottages. A series of intergenerational workshops, with hundreds of participants, focused on reviving the craft of slap brick making. The fields on the banks of the River Arney had been used for outdoor brick making with the last brick kiln operating in the area until 1939. The distinctive red-bricks travelled down the river to Enniskillen town on flat-bottomed river 'cots'. The brick making workshops added a creative side to the wider archaeological excavations with workshops led by Tony Mugridge, the last travelling brick builder in Britain and Ireland. A key aspect of discovery was in the particular local tradition of turf fired kilns which was expanded with technical knowledge of local materials.



Excerpt of the 1st edition 6 inch OS map dated to 1835. The schoolhouse and cottages are circled red⁵.

⁵ Brian Sloan, Dermot Redmond, Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queens University Belfast, Excavations at Arney, Co. Fermanagh (H 20725 37002) AE/14/01E

The second layer of the project focused on the restoration of the 17th-century Arney Bridge. The driving ambition was to have the bridge registered as a listed structure so that it would receive support for ongoing maintenance. The 17th-century bridge was refurbished and is now recognised as one of the oldest plantation bridges still intact in Northern Ireland.



The final layer of the project looked to local knowledge to establish the exact site of the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits in 1594, the start of the Nine Years War. The local community had long held that the battle site was a mile and a half off from where the experts claimed it had taken place. Dr Paul Logue, archaeologist at the Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities NI, worked together with the community to test folk memory. It yielded information that has helped to better understand the events of that period of history, including confirming that the local memory proved reliable. Archaeological excavation also led to the rediscovery of a route way and river ford dating back to the Bronze Age as well as the find of a late Bronze Age sword from 800 BC.

Influence and Impact

To capture the project's varied activities and approaches a documentary film was commissioned. Battles, Bricks and Bridges has been recognised as an innovative model of community participation in archaeology and won prestigious awards including Best Community Engagement

Archaeological Project at the British Archaeological Awards 2016. It has also won various awards for its curriculum-based materials. Following their success, the community is now developing several expanded projects and initiatives. The community went on to receive a further funding for a Community Battlefield Trail starting at Arney Hall and will create a wider series of walking and cycle trails across the geographical area with local partners to incorporate key heritage assets. The destination for walks and links to local heritage will again be developed by local people with further future plans already in development. One of the more lasting effect of the project is the bond of respect and friendship it forged across various parts of Northern Ireland. Now, new local champions for heritage have been encouraged in the next generation. And, through its own taking hold and, through being empowered through partnership and support, the local communities have enacted their rights to citizen determination of their heritage – the bridge at Arney is now a listed structure, protected for the long term.



Acknowledgements

The above is an edited extract from Other Stories, Culture Heritage and Society, a research and advocacy project carried out by Workhouse Union (<https://workhouseunion.com>) and commissioned by ICOMOS Ireland

Appendix

How the project resonates with the Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage to Society:

Article 7 – Cultural heritage and dialogue

The Parties undertake, through the public authorities and other competent bodies, to:

- a. encourage reflection on the ethics and methods of presentation of the cultural heritage, as well as respect for diversity of interpretations;
- b. establish processes for conciliation to deal equitably with situations where contradictory values are placed on the same cultural heritage by different communities;
- c. develop knowledge of cultural heritage as a resource to facilitate peaceful co-existence by promoting trust and mutual understanding with a view to resolution and prevention of conflicts;
- d. integrate these approaches into all aspects of lifelong education and training.

Article 8 – Environment, heritage and quality of life

The Parties undertake to utilise all heritage aspects of the cultural environment to:

- a. enrich the processes of economic, political, social and cultural development and land-use planning, resorting to cultural heritage impact assessments and adopting mitigation strategies where necessary;
- b. promote an integrated approach to policies concerning cultural, biological, geological and landscape diversity to achieve a balance between these elements;
- c. reinforce social cohesion by fostering a sense of shared responsibility towards the places in which people live;
- d. promote the objective of quality in contemporary additions to the environment without endangering its cultural values.

Article 9 – Sustainable use of the cultural heritage:

The Parties undertake to utilise all heritage aspects of the cultural environment to:

- a. enrich the processes of economic, political, social and cultural development and land-use planning, resorting to cultural heritage impact assessments and adopting mitigation strategies where necessary;

- b. promote an integrated approach to policies concerning cultural, biological, geological and landscape diversity to achieve a balance between these elements;
- c. reinforce social cohesion by fostering a sense of shared responsibility towards the places in which people live;
- d. promote the objective of quality in contemporary additions to the environment without endangering its cultural values.

Article 11 – The organisation of public responsibilities for cultural heritage

In the management of the cultural heritage, the Parties undertake to:

- a. promote an integrated and well-informed approach by public authorities in all sectors and at all levels;
- b. develop the legal, financial and professional frameworks which make possible joint action by public authorities, experts, owners, investors, businesses, non-governmental organisations and civil society;
- c. develop innovative ways for public authorities to co-operate with other actors;
- d. respect and encourage voluntary initiatives which complement the roles of public authorities; encourage non-governmental organisations concerned with heritage conservation to act in the public interest.

Article 12 – Access to cultural heritage and democratic participation

The Parties undertake to:

- a. encourage everyone to participate in:
 - the process of identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage ;
 - public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents;
- b. take into consideration the value attached by each heritage community to the cultural heritage with which it identifies;
- c. recognise the role of voluntary organisations both as partners in activities and as constructive critics of cultural heritage policies;

- d. take steps to improve access to the heritage, especially among young people and the disadvantaged, in order to raise awareness about its value, the need to maintain and preserve it, and the benefits which may be derived from it.

Article 13 – Cultural heritage and knowledge

The Parties undertake to:

- a. facilitate the inclusion of the cultural heritage dimension at all levels of education, not necessarily as a subject of study in its own right, but as a fertile source for studies in other subjects;
- b. strengthen the link between cultural heritage education and vocational training; encourage interdisciplinary research on cultural heritage, heritage communities, the environment and their inter-relationship;
- c. encourage continuous professional training and the exchange of knowledge and skills, both within and outside the educational system.